

## Issue 8

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# QUACKJOHN'S MUSICAL SPOONS

## Stew Stansfield

*Musical spoons are a popular bardic instrument in Dragon Pass. Many skalds believe the spoons' accompaniment adds a sense of gravity and mythic resonance to their tales. Such instruments can be made from many materials, but the finest spoons are made from elfwood or enchanted metal. Quackjohn, the noted wereduck tenor, is one of the finest Third Age exponents of the art of musical spoons.*

### Description

A set of six enchanted metal spoons of identical shape, each six inches in length. Each spoon is made of a different refined metal—aluminium, brass, copper, gold, lead and silver—and has a rune carved upon its bowl.

### Cults

Associated—Donandar, The Trickster.

### Knowledge

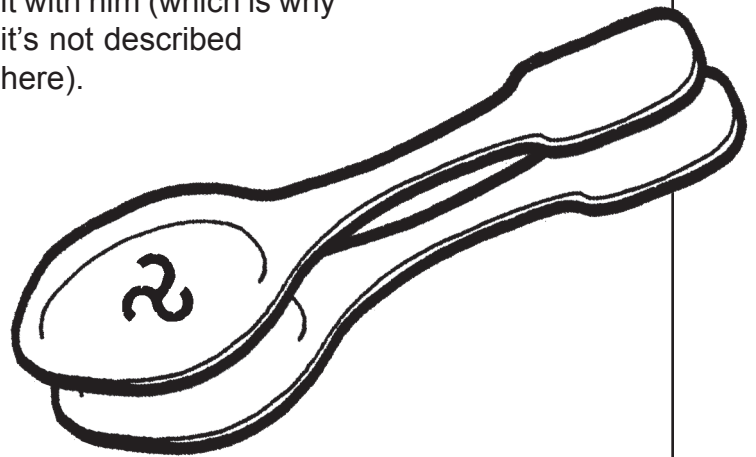
Automatic; Few.

### History

Magical musical spoons are commonly associated with Donandar. Most stories suggest that, when all other musical instruments had been destroyed in the Great Darkness, the god of music used his talent for improvisation to perform a spoon-song of hope. An alternate myth ascribes their creation to Eurmál: the Trickster grew bored while listening to Lhan-kor Mhy drone on in Orlanth's hall, and start-

ed playing a rumba with the utensils. Musical spoons are sacred to both cults.

Quackjohn lost his spoons during one of the many attacks on Gringle's Pawnshop. Except the tin spoon – he was eating soup with it at the time of the alarm, and kept it with him (which is why it's not described here).



### Procedure

Refined metal musical spoons draw upon the power inherent to each alloy or metal. It is not enough to simply enchant the metal, however: each spoon must be magically tempered. The aluminium spoon must be immersed in the source-waters of the Skyriver Titan. The brass spoon must be dipped in the mead of the Storm King's hall. The copper spoon must be drenched in a Year King's blood. The gold spoon must be plunged into magical lava, such as that found at Caladra's Mouth. (n.b. A Death Lord's breakfast of lava-porridge works just as well.) The lead spoon must be wet with the tears of a Mistress Race troll.

Quackjohn is always on the lookout for a true stone spoon, but has never found one. (He's now on the lookout for the rest of his spoons, too!) There are no iron spoons.

## RuneQuest Powers

Each spoon acts as a spell matrix, holding a single spirit magic spell. When two spoons are played as a pair, the player can attempt to use both matrices – he must try to cast both spells, or neither. Playing one magical spoon and one normal spoon—or banging a spoon on another object—will not work. Only the greatest bardic heroes (Rune Priests of Donandar with a Musical Spoons skill of 90%+) can play two sets of spoons at once. The spoons work a little differently to normal spell matrices:

- The chance of successfully casting a spell from a spoon is equal to the user's Musical Spoons skill, rather than POW x 5. A single roll is made for a pair of spoons. If the player succeeds, both spells are cast; if he fails, neither is cast.
- Spells are cast by the spoons simultaneously. The player only counts the strike rank modifier of one spell (i.e. +2) when determining his SR, irrespective of the number of pairs of spoons he's playing. The player still expends the usual number of magic points for successful or failed casts.

The spoons are moderately intelligent; being sacred to Donandar, they are able to recognize those in the player's 'performing troupe' when bestowing their gifts. Beneficial magics affect all party-members and allies within close earshot of the player (typically a 15-metre radius). The lead spoon's Demoralize matrix affects neutral and/or hostile entities within the same distance.

## Spell Matrices:

**Aluminium spoon** ~ – Coordination 2 matrix. *The targets' limbs move with the grace and fluidity of Water. A fitting boon for jugglers, acrobats and purse-pinchers.*

**Brass spoon** 2 – Mobility 2 matrix. *Affected persons move with the lightness of Air. A useful accompaniment for dancers, and comedians who misjudge their audience.*

**Copper spoon** □ – Vigor 2 matrix. *The power of the Earth flows through one's bones and sinews. Puts life, zest and passion into a physical performance.*

## Example:

Those baboons are making headway in their attack on Gringle's Pawnshop, and Quackjohn (DEX 15, Musical Spoons 80%) has run out of crossbow bolts. Thankfully the duck had his musical spoons to hand, and spent the previous round selecting a suitable pair: the lead spoon and the copper spoon. Since the spoons are readied, his SR for this round is 5 (+3 for his DEX, +2 for the magic-point cost of one spell). Quackjohn starts up a dainty salsa with his magical spoons. Like any sensible duck, he's hiding behind a posse of PC adventurers and reaches his SR untouched. He rolls 43.

*Success!* Quackjohn expends four magic points (two for the Demoralize matrix and two for the Vigor 2 matrix). A wave of doom hits the baboons, but Gringle and his accomplices are newly invigorated! Thoughts turn to the celebration of their impending victory – a game of snooker and a trip to the Ulerian temple sound good.

**Gold spoon ☉** – Endurance 2 matrix. *The targets are strengthened by the indefatigable energy of Fire. Aids long performances, particularly if the entertainers are wearing expansive and/or heavy costumes.*

**Lead spoon ●** – Demoralize matrix. *A pall of Darkness rises from the depths and casts its shadow over the soul. Great for accompanying scary stories and doom-laden tales.*

**Silver spoon ☾** – Glamour 2 matrix. *One's voice and form is clad in the alluring enchantments of the Moon, darling. Fay. May not be appreciated at Vadruding gatherings.*

### **HeroQuest Powers**

Each spoon acts as a runic ability, with a rating equal to the hero's *Musical Spoons* ability. Initiates and devotees of Donandar and Trickster cults may also use their *Entertainment* or *Disorder* rune affinities at a -6 penalty. If a hero has multiple appropriate abilities, he may use whichever is highest. No other abilities are applicable – not even at a penalty. In the hands of a character with *Musical Spoons* 6<sup>W</sup> and *Trickster* 15<sup>W</sup>, therefore, the spoons would have the following ratings: ~9<sup>W</sup> (Water; aluminium spoon); ♀ 9<sup>W</sup> (Air; brass spoon); ☐ 9<sup>W</sup> (Earth; copper spoon); ☉ 9<sup>W</sup> (Fire; gold spoon); ● 9<sup>W</sup> (Darkness; lead spoon); ☾ 9<sup>W</sup> (Moon; silver spoon).

A spoon's magic is typically used as an augment or an assist. A hero may attempt to use a spoon actively, but this should always count as a stretch. A Narrator may allow heroes to gain two augments from the spoons (instead of the usual one allowed), on account of the peculiar duality of the items' powers. These are magical musical spoons, after all.

### **Value**

Enchanted metals lose their properties when reforged, so these spoons are mainly of value to those who appreciate their musical capabilities. (On closer inspection, it seems that the person who manufactured Quackjohn's spoons was a bit of a cheapskate. The gold, silver and aluminium spoons are actually tin, plated with more valuable metals. They still seem to work, however.) These spoons are worth many lunars or cows to a bard or Trickster. Quackjohn really wants his spoons back, too. He may be willing to trade one of his finest elfwood snooker cues in exchange.



## Bad spoons! Bad!

Not all spoons work well together. Enchanted metals are associated with mythic entities and pantheons, many of which are engaged in conflict. The animosities between Fire and Darkness, and Storm and Moon, are particularly strong. A player attempting to combine the gold and lead spoons, or the silver and brass spoons, will unleash powerful magics. Other battles—such as those between Fire and Water—may also affect the spoons at the Gamemaster or Narrator's discretion. The bronze and gold spoons do work together, but vibrate a lot and make quite a racket!

Once paired, opposed spoons do magical battle. One spoon will be victorious. The effects of these conflicts are listed below. These effects are not common knowledge, but an inkling of the dangers should be apparent to those with common sense. If in doubt, don't cross the spoons...



In *RuneQuest*, attempts to use the spell matrices of opposed spoons automatically fail: the spoons are busy fighting each other. Each spoon has a 50% chance of victory. The victorious spoon casts a Divine Magic spell on strike rank 10 of the round in which the spoons were used. These spells are Blinding (lead spoon) or Sunspear (gold spoon); and Madness (silver spoon) or Thunderbolt (brass spoon). The spell is centred on the player and affects all in a 15-yard radius, friend or foe.



In *HeroQuest*, a simple contest is waged between the opposing spoons. There are no benefits to victory, but any state of adversity is applied not only to the losing spoon itself, but also to any and all persons and entities involved in the scene. This state of adversity affects all attempts to use Otherworld magic related to the defeated spoon's rune.

Heroes often possess a strong connection to a rune. If a hero's rune is in opposition to that of a spoon, it can hinder the spoon's magic, acting as a temporary flaw. Similarly, a spoon's rune may act likewise, harming a hero's attempts to use an opposed rune affinity or spirit tradition. The effects vary according to the intricacies of myth; they are not always mirrored. A Yelmalian Bright Son would might experience difficulties with a lead spoon, but a Death Lord of Zorak Zoran would have no problems wielding a gold spoon (assuming he hadn't eaten it).



# GENERTELA GETS A NAME

**Greg Stafford**

In its earliest days a part of Glorantha was called Brilliantia. In its virgin years nothing here was dark or fearful. Everyone and everything got along without any trace of trouble or problem.

Leaders emerged for the first time in Brilliantia. They weren't appointed, as Yelm had been. They simply did something, and others followed. No one planned anything in those days.

The first leader in Brilliantia was called Genert. He was a Namer. He did not make up language - a much wiser god called Idovanus did that. But with a band of his equals Genert went about the whole of Brilliantia and gave names to the things which they encountered. He gave names to everything, and so the totality of that everything was in turn named after him. Thus Genertela became the second name of the lands of Brilliantia, and that name is still used today.

When we Journey to those simple times we can still speak that Universal Tongue. Everything can speak to each other, because there is only one way to communicate and everything is able to do so. The Divine is all around us there. We speak Genert's Tongue.

Be warned, though: a Journey to Genert's Era is dangerous to anyone who has not learned that they are, in fact, a Small God. The power of that simple, first language is such that ut-



tering it at any time causes something to be created. If you do this, and do not know the secrets of being a Small God, the consequences of your actions will have the same disastrous consequences which they had for those original beings.

The Universal Language is the Language of Creation, and so any petty utterance creates something. Imagine the glorious consonance of many voices joined in the Song of Creation! What you imagine is a tiny part of what everyone sang after words were made. Seyotel, the Beautiful Word and the Song Goddess, led the Great song. The harmonies of the world as their tune. The song praised the beauty and the glories of the Garden of Life, and that flowery reality bloomed all around the singers.

That is the origin of Flower and Song. When Flower and Song are done right, we can return to that very garden. Unlike the originators, however, we inevitably know the sorrow too, and so despite immortal beauty we know grief too. We know that the flowers shall die. Those first singers, of course, knew nothing of their future, where we live. It lurked out of sight to them, unseen, like the lurking evils were just another kind of butterfly or bright bird in the song.

Look at that brightness: when we sing the song right then our grief disappears. The four-colored notes, those hummingbirds which

circle and hover, leap from our throats to the three-colored petals of love. Even the thorns of the bright red rose are an exquisite lesson, teaching us of the redness within ourselves. When we finish singing, and we are sad, then we should remember that red life inside us.

The song that Seyotel led was of one hundred birds, one thousand butterflies, and one million flowers. It was the first, and no other was ever as magnificent. From that moment forward the Garden was a favorite place of comfort and unity for all beings of Glorantha.

That was the Song of Gen-ert.



# THE MINERAL WORLD

## Greg Stafford

The physical material of The Spike was the Ultimate Rock, called Truestone. It was not like the dead rocks we know today. Many rocks today can be found that are alive, but even they are not like Truestone. It contained the essence and vitality of all rocks. It was the First Solid which ever existed. Every other solid thing is a weak imitation of that ancient mountain.

The nature of growing life was to duplicate the primary creative impulse in a slightly different way. The single mineral of Glorantha was reproduced first as new mountains, later as new types of rock, new soils, and finally as beings.

### The New Mountains

At first there was only one of anything, then maybe one of everything inside the mountain, and then on the Outside later on were many of many things.

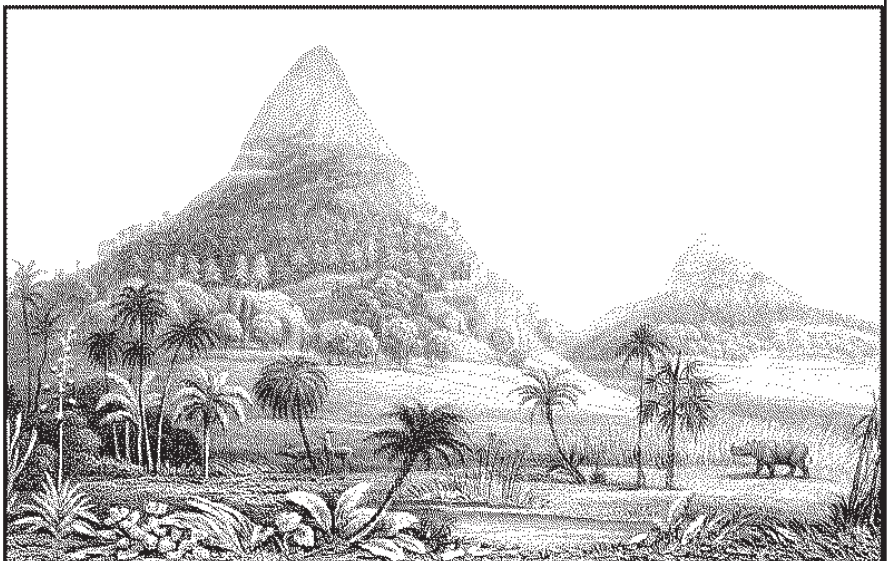
The Spike was the First Mountain. From One came Many. As the world of multiplicity grew a second mountain was inevitable. This became an event when Larnste, the god of change, departed for the first time out from the secret innards of the Spike.

One day Larnste and Lodril met. Lodril, with the help of Larnste's power of Change, raised for himself the magnificent Mount Turos, better known as the Mountain of Fire. That was the second moun-

tain, and its enemies called it Artarvey. Turos was similar in many ways to the Spike but, of course, never as large or as grand. Like the Spike, Turos also grew, and many different beings lived upon and within it. Lodril used that great mountain as the doorway to his home. Fire Mountain itself was ruled by his son Turos.

Larnste kept walking around. As he strolled past them many other deities also wished to try to make a copy of the One Mountain. Of course, they were inevitably slightly or mightily different.

The Second Dragon, cut from its transcendent ancestor's belly, made the second mountain. Some people say that Second Dragon intended to make its mountain more correct than Lodril's Mount Turos, and as a result of that desire was imbedded forever with the ancient earth. Whatever its motivation, the Second Dragon crawled from inside and went to the north east.





The Second Dragon raised its mountain from the secret inner powers of the earth, and took up residence inside. This mighty mountain had two tops instead of one. One of the peaks was white, like the Spike, but the other was black.

The third deity which stirred to make a mountain was Chalana Arroy, who we know now as a Goddess of Harmony. She sat upon a slope of the Spike, and reached out her right hand and invoked the power of Innocence. As a result of her desire, her mountain was inverted, and made instead a deep hole whose volume, say philosophers, exactly equaled the volume raised by the mountains that were made before. Later on this huge pit was filled by water and became known as the Pool of Serenity.

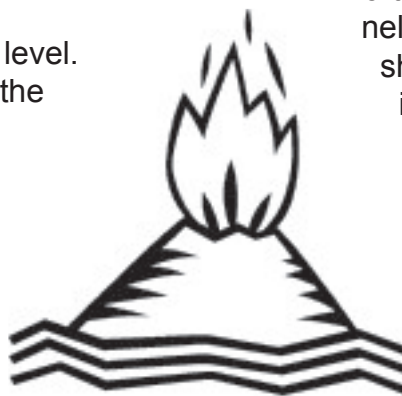
The fourth to make a mountain was a great builder. He was Mostal, who is the father of the Maker Race. He is the Tool, the Maker of the Machine. Mostal was hearty but not very imaginative. He took everyone else's ideas and combined them. Thus he made a really big, two-peaked mountain which grew both up and down at once. This mountain was called Mostal's Mountain.

After this the puny foothills rose around Spike, like afterthoughts by the Great Mountain. Some of those were very unusual, like Poetry Peak; others would be important later, like the one called Gonn Orta.

## Mount Lodril

The perfect earth was pretty level. No features broke it, except for the Great Mountain.

The first gods were naturally creative. Many beings did great things. Leaders emerged because others followed them. Leadership emerged first in Brilliantia.



One of the first Big Gods was Lodril. Large numbers of the Old Ones gathered around the him. (aka ViSaruDaran, Entekosiad p 16). He was a Big God because he was a Fire God, from Above, but he had also been under the earth. Also, Lodril had already made lots of things, including plants and animals and peoples. (Lodril is still, today, a Great God.)

Lodril's first tribe was the race called the Moderi. They called their ancestor by many names, but around his home they called him Father Lodril. Many of the Moderi are gods today, while some of the children of the Father were human beings, but no one knew any different at first. They were all so innocent that they didn't even wear clothes.

So the Moderi went around shaping the earth. At that time they didn't have spirits and bodies. They were just the Shapers. They didn't do the work alone, but enlisted the help of whatever awoke where they touched. Most of the time they made things that were whole, but sometimes they were of either only spirit or body, or other parts.

They shaped the land, such as the time that Gerendetho wanted to amuse his child son and made the Gerendetho Hills for him to run up and down. Or when Harakeel the Tall took a little growing rock and made it stretch out to become the mountain we call Top of the World. Several gods, such as Mohenjar in the north and Sener in the south, dug channels and invited seductive lovers to share it with them. (Today Mohenjar is remembered as God of Irrigation while Sener was drowned, and is now a demon.)

Mount Lodril was the palace where Lodril lived. It was very similar to Mount Spike. Its surface was broken into cliffs and valleys, and grown over by forests and brush.

The Spike had tribes of immortals living upon its surface, and on Mount Lodril many of the Moderi, the Holy Ones, had camps. They gathered there, the peoples and the animals that the Moderi had made. Inside Mount Lodril was the greatest shrine of Lodril. He had raised the first Lodril Pillar there when he taught his wife and her family how to worship the Supreme Being of the Gods.

I went there once. It is easy to recognize. It looks like a huge penis, to the blind. It is lingam pillar of immortal proportions, for no human being can ever see its top and bottom both, nor measure its circumference. In the vast chamber which surrounds this you can find the places where Lodril's worshippers knelt. If you can, you should try to fit your knees into one of those pairs there. If you fit correctly you will gain contact with that ancient deity, and also a glance into the Transcendent. In the ancient days of creation, no one even thought about such things, though. If you Journey to such sites now, you will probably find them empty of contemporaries from that innocent age.

## **The Rockwoods**

The god called Larnste the Change one time went out of the fortress in which the Gloranthan Council normally lived. He was, after all, the Changing One, and he had to do this in order to keep on Changing. He could do nothing else. He was Change. So eventually he changed his location and he went outside.

Larnste strode upon the verdant plains of the outside world. This place was called the Surface World. It is on top of the ground that we walk on, and it was underneath the sky. He walked, first, on the slopes of the great mountain, Mount Spike.

Larnste stood and looked down where the little people lived.

Maybe this was the first time that a difference between different beings was noted. Larnste then and there was assuredly larger than the ones that he looked at. We are little, next to him.

All of the Gloranthan Council appeared to be giants whenever they came out of the mountain. Even to the great gods like Lodril and Mostal the Council members appeared like giants. If you ever get to Journey to the time when Larnste Walked, then you will see what gigantic is like. So Larnste looked down at the two groups of people that he saw.

They were arguing. They were two tribes and they were arguing.

One of the tribes was called the Tilntae, and they were a tribe who were wonderful growers of things. Tilna, their goddess, was called the Grower, and all of this tribe grew new ones of each other. They were once everywhere, but today the strongest survivors are the plants. That is because one of them, Shans, grew a race of people. They became entangled with the plant beings. Maybe Tilna had borne the Shans so that she would share in the People Rune like all other forms of life were doing. The modern day elves, the People of the Grower, claim this to us.

The other people we call today the Davimostingsi, named after their own god Davimostings. Mostal was the maker, and he had already made his own big mountain and inhabited it with his Davimostingsi. They cheerfully dug through the mountain, refined crude portions to draw out metals, and recrafted the simple stone into elegant beauty.

So they were discussing about the best way to create: was it growing or building? This was, of course, their nature. Larnste saw that this conflict was really a manifestation of his power,

because as the tribes spoke the world around them was changing.

All of a sudden, though, both tribes stopped talking. Nothing was changed, but both were satisfied. Each tribe then went their own way.

That was when Larnste took something from his bag, and he planted it into the ground where the argument had been held. And then he took another change from his bag and did it again, and again, and over and over. Where each seed was placed there grew a tree of stone. They were rock and wood. They grow so closely that they became a formidable fence, far too steep to be climbed by either the Davimostingsi or Shanasse.

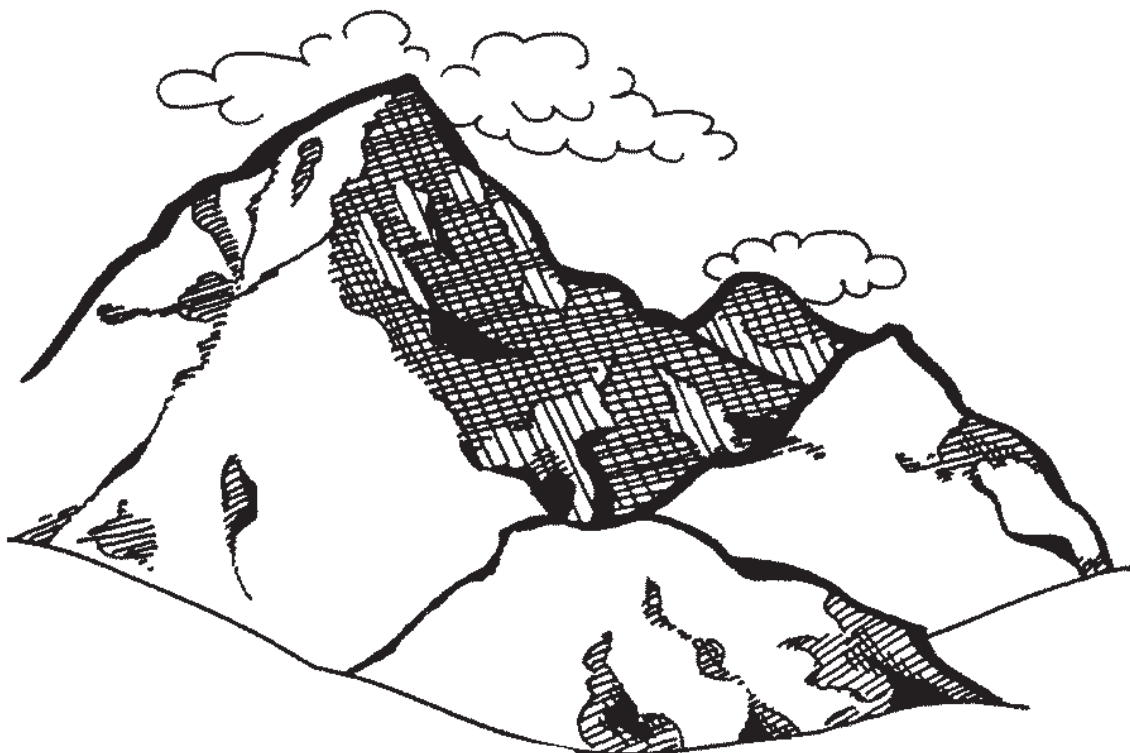
So the giant used this to cut both of the two tribes apart, making four where two had been. That place, where the tribes were sundered, was and is called the Bad Rockwoods Mountains. Trolls live there now. [Halikiv]

But because of that, things kept changing. One of the Davimosting tribes and one of the

Shanasse tribes each became dire foes. Their descendants are the dwarfs and the elves of today.

The garden of Larnste, which we call the Rockwoods, continued to grow upward, eventually being so tall that they poked the Sky. Dayzatar was the name of the Sky.

"The Sky should not change," grumbled Dayzatar, "Certainly not to suit a rock." The Sky was a lot closer then, because there wasn't any weather in between. The Sky can not be touched, and so when Dayzatar asked Lodril to shake the Rockwoods down, Lodril did. The growing Rockwoods things were shattered. The pieces have been ground down by events of the ages, but enough still remains to be the largest mountain range alive today. We call the Rockwoods now. They're still so powerful that they keep peoples apart.



# ARLARALANTH'S WYVERNEERS

**Roderick Robertson**

***Control of the Skies is the key to a new World***

The Wyverneers are a unit of men and women (and others) mounted on wyverns. Their role is usually air-superiority – they are there to eliminate enemy fliers from the skies. They are the pet project of Baron Arlaralanth, a Kostaddi nobleman. He oversees the squadron, flies lead on his four-legged wyvern, Ruby Red, and tries to keep “his boys and girls” away from military justice. He will intercede for them at every level (his family has connections at the Imperial Court), and has even been known to lead his merry band on rescue missions.

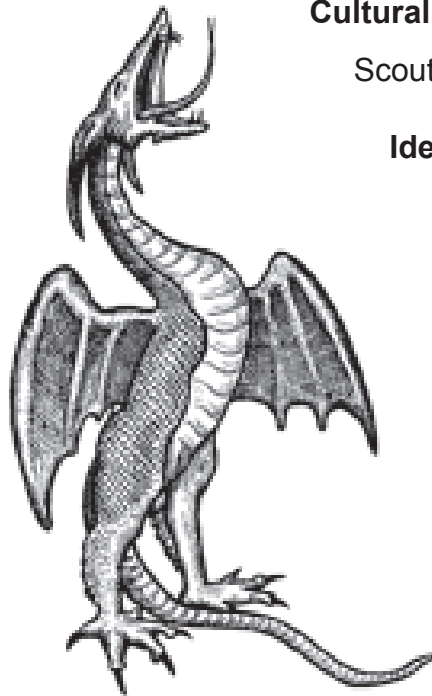
The fliers are the stars of the show, but there is a large contingent of “ground crew” who keep the unit performing smoothly, the wyverns fed and healthy, and they provide the pilots what they need.

**Common Names:**

The Flying Circus; Snakes with Wings; Naked Birds

**Form:**

Light, flying Military Unit



**Cultural Context:**

Scouts and Air Superiority

**Ideology:**

Flying is not just a job, It's an adventure!

**Look and Feel**

A rag-tag band of aerial warriors and stuntmen. Misfits, they are slovenly in camp, disrespectful of authority figures (except their leader), and pure dynamite in the air. A combination of von Richthofen's Flying Circus, 'Pappy' Boyington's Black Sheep Squadron, and the guys from M\*A\*S\*H.

**Purpose:**

To wage war in the sky.

**Headquarters:**

The band makes its base wherever its needed. The base is usually well behind the front lines of battle or siege, which does not make the Wyverneers popular with the rank-and-file soldiers of the army. The unit has a number of sumptuous tents for its mess-hall, barracks, and to protect the wyverns when on the ground. The local area is scoured for the best in food, drink and entertainment.



**Reactions:**

Military officers dislike them because of the image they project, and they are constantly “up on charges”. However, no-one can complain of the way they perform their duties. If the Lunar Army gave unit demerits, they’d have a bucketful.

**Resources****Leader:**

“Baron” Arlaralanthor, the somewhat stolid commander of the Wyverneers, acts and dresses much more conservatively than the men and women under his command. He tries his best to keep “The Gold” (General Staff officers and REMFs in general) off his boys and girls, and to keep them out of trouble and flying. He is on good terms with his family (The Smer-Fakolar family of Kostaddi, a prominent family in the River Plateau League).

**Renowned Members:**

“Wildman” Aggayanafals, the best flyer in the band. Completely contemptuous of “The Gold”. Paints his wyvern in a bold red and white pattern.

“Ice Maiden” Ravarina. The only daughter of a noble from Rinliddi, she was forbidden entrance to the Avilry, and took the next best thing. She is a natural born flyer and killer. Her wyvern, Icebeak, is painted in blues, whites and grays.

Three-eye Haldor. An Illuminated broo with a head and a half, an arm and a half, and a penis and a half. He is the best shot with the heavy bows favored by the unit. His wyvern, Shit from the Skies, has perfected “bombing runs” with feces.

**Membership:**

9 Pilots and wyverns, about 150 “ground crew”.

**Other Contacts:**

This unit was raised by the Baron out of his personal pocket. His good relations with his family and League allow him to provide the best equipment and beasts available to his fliers. The family controls the Lurnirjat Breeding Reach, giving the unit access to good wyvern stock. The unit is seen as both an asset and a liability by the military authorities, and is often misunderstood as to its purpose, so is given assignments well outside of their parameters or expertise. It will be noted that with few exceptions, they have performed brilliantly during these missions.

**Organization**

The Wyverneers consider themselves an elite unit. If they held more to military discipline and stayed out of trouble, others might agree with them. But their attitude is not without merit – they have proven their worth in air-superiority roles from one end of the empire to the other. The unit is composed of the highly eccentric and egotistical fliers, and the more down-to-



earth ground crew. The fliers get the glory, while the ground crew get to stay away from the fighting.

The 9 wyverns fly in three “Wings” of three wyverns each. The intention is that the fliers support each other, but much more often aerial combat devolves into a free-for-all commonly called a “Snake-fight”.

Each wyvern has a dedicated keeper and feeder, each pilot has a body servant. Healing is provided to both men and wyverns, and the medical unit is particularly experienced with poisons.

## Membership Keyword

### Membership Requirements:

Ground crew need to follow orders, and not annoy the pilots too badly. Special abilities in the handling of wyverns (or pilots) are a plus, but there is always a need for cooks and medics, quartermasters and general servants. Pilots are usually recruited from the wyvern-handlers among the ground crew, who already have experience with the irascible dragonids, and have the opportunity to learn to ride. If a qualified rider applied to join the group, he would not be turned away.

### Abilities taught:

Ride Wyvern, Aerial Combat, Bow Combat, Lance Combat, Acrobatic flying

### Typical Personality Traits:

**Pilots:** Daredevil, Devil-may-care, Reject Authority (Other than the Baron). **Ground Crew:** Ignore Arrogance

### Magic:

None specifically taught. Most pilots follow warriors Cults, Traditions or Orders

## Guardian Being

The Baron’s Wyvern, Ruby Red, is the Guardian of the band. Ruby Red has forelegs, which makes some question whether he is a wyvern or perhaps a small Dream-Dragon.

### Method:

Manifest

### Form:

Ruby Red, the baron’s Four-legged wyvern. It pulses with a scarlet light, which can intensify until it is blinding. Its teeth and claws are (or seem to be) silver.

### Membership Requirements:

Ruby Red requires that his followers wear the color Red somewhere on their person at all times, that they drink nothing but the best wine, gin or spirits available in their current assignment, that they tattoo the “Wyvern’s Eye” over their right breast.

### Awareness Function:

*Detect Flying Enemy.* A red beam will flash out from Ruby Red to pinpoint approaching enemy fliers.

### Blessing Function:

*Stay On.* Even in the most acrobatic maneuvers Ruby Red’s magic helps the wyverns keep their riders

### Defense Function:

*Tough Belly.* The belly and chest skin (of both the wyverns and the riders) toughens, granting armor against attacks directed at the front of the pilot, or the belly of the wyvern. This aids against both aerial opponents and archery from the ground.

## Typical Kit-out for a Wyvern and Rider

### Pilot:

Leather armor and helmet

Lance

Heavy Bow

### Wyvern:

Strap-on bronze tail spikes (Silver-chased  
Iron for Ruby Red)



# TSWO-SHEN

## David Millians

Tswo-shen are Kralori ghosts, a vast and diverse category of entities, a selection of which is given below. The general term is “tswo-shen,” though the less inimical forms are not usually referred to in this pejorative manner.

Most such creatures are at least semi-corporeal but tend to be lightweight and eat very little. There are various ways of identifying tswo-shen. Most cast no shadows and wear garments with no hems. Some are near-sighted, and some turn fires green.

Many Tswo-shen can change shape, and the most common form is a dark cloud, especially by daylight. Others can take multiple human forms, assume beast shapes, change gender, or even remove body parts and send them roaming about. Possession is a common general trait of ghosts, but many desire direct interaction with mortals.

Tswo-shen are more frequent around crossroads, taverns, inns and other places of comings and goings. Ghosts can find people in bed more easily if their shoes are lined up neatly.

A variety of tricks can be used to ward against or drive off tswo-shen. Their efficacy varies from one situation to another. Dogs and some other animals are better at sensing ghosts than

are people. Fireworks and other loud noises frighten ghosts. Spit, jade, glutinous rice (especially thirty-six pieces), grinding teeth, and willow branches or wands tend to block or harm ghosts. Folklore claims that red shoes or underwear stops or captures them.

An encounter with a ghost can leave a lingering or permanent effect, depending on the suffering of the victim and degree of success of the ghost. Some types of ghosts are passive or even pleasant.



The brief descriptions below cover only a few of the types of undead known in Kralorela. Even within these types, there is wide variation.

**Aunties** – These ghosts of elderly, commoner women return to work in houses like where they lived and worked.

*Significant Abilities:* Bad Luck, Clean, Spooky

**Baby Eater** – Women that died in childbirth or that suffered in a childless marriage can return as Baby Eaters, malevolent ghosts that wither the flesh of infants.

*Exceptional Abilities:* Haunt Nursery, Suck Away Infant Flesh



**Banana Tree Lady with Baby** – These ghosts seem to be nature spirits; perhaps from forests of long ago, though some Kralori claim they are deceased prostitutes. Banana tree ladies are only found in Boshan Province. They are not dangerous and can sometimes be tricked into giving lucky advice.

*Significant Abilities:* Cute Baby, Know Lucky Advice, Low Class, Talk for Hours

**Bird** – Bird ghosts are dangerous entities. They are as large as horses and have nine heads and feathers of many pale hues. They often draw carriages. Sometimes they grab people in their beaks, carrying away their souls, but even the touch of one or its feather is enough to kill someone. They are thought to be the suffering ghosts of servants of Emperor Mikaday. They usually haunt remote places and ancient ruins.

*Legendary Abilities:* Seize in Beak, Swirl of Feathers, Touch of Death

**Butterflies** sometimes represent or are ghosts. They are benign, often beautiful or



melancholy. They tend to flutter about a place of significance to the deceased lovers.

*Significant Abilities:* Beautiful, Melancholy

**Cannibal** – When someone dies while eating human flesh, he becomes a cannibal ghost. Some say ghouls also become these maleficent creatures when they die.

*Significant Abilities:* Bite & Tear, Hunger for Human Flesh

**Castrated** – When a man dies without his genitalia, he becomes this kind of ghost. Most eunuchs keep their severed organs in a small jar, to be buried with them, to avoid this fate, so such ghosts are rare. They are mostly pests but can become harmful when truly desperate.

*Significant Abilities:* Caper Unnervingly, Steal Male Genitalia

*Exceptional Abilities:* Grope, Stalk Man

**Deceiver** – This is another name for Hai Noo.

**Drowned** – Kralori that drown often return to kill others in the same way. Even far from water, they can drown their victims, filling their lungs with water and absorbing life from them, sometimes even regaining their own mortal existences, often forgetting the evil interlude in their lives. Of course, at least one other person has replaced them in their deadly role.

*Exceptional Abilities:* Drown Victim, Forget Past

**Excrement Eaters** – The ghosts originate in the death of speakers of ill words. They haunt latrines and the fringes of villages, hungering for others' waste. They pose no immediate danger to mortals, but their foul behavior soon leads locals to try to drive them off.

*Significant Abilities:* Eat Shit, Moan Eerily, Noisome Smell, Play with Excrement

**Foreign** – These ghosts assume a wide range of forms but always look strange to Kralori eyes. Some obviously originate from Teshnos, Pent, or other nearby lands, but some have extra limbs, bizarre features, and mysterious powers. All, though, fill viewers with a sense of dread, and many can instill their evil attitudes in mortals, leading to sinful thinking and bad behavior.

*Significant Abilities:* Babble Incoherently, Dreadful Appearance, Instill with Vice

**Friends** – Underworld officials in need of extra training are sometimes sent to the mortal world to watch over an individual. This seems to occur at random. Their assignment usually includes observation and lending help, preferably without drawing any attention to itself, though these are not the Underworld's most skilled officials.

*Significant Abilities:* Be Subtle, Lend Luck, Watch Carefully

**Frog** – These annoying spirits are apparently ancient and cthonian in origin. They inhabit the corners of rooms, often the northern corners. They tend to come in noisy groups, requiring offerings or exorcism.

*Significant Abilities:* Croak Annoyingly

**Ghost Mother** – Some of these beings are primeval and very powerful, but most seem to be fragments of the souls of women that feel responsible for the deaths of their children. A ghost mother appears to be a normal, pregnant woman and gives birth to ten children at a time, tends them, coddles them, loves them, and then eats them all in the same evening. These spirits pose no direct threat to mortals, but their disturbing actions can drive some to madness.

*Significant Abilities:* Horrifying Behavior



**Girl Wraith** – A girl wraith seems to be a form of Double. It is projected by an ill girl and takes the form of a beautiful woman, who leads life of perhaps many years but eventually re-merges with her original self, often just as she dies. The girl wraith may not even be aware of her origin.

*Exceptional Abilities:* Beautiful, Cultivated

**Green Dwarf** – These strange creatures occur singly or in small groups. They are the ghosts of some of the ancient inhabitants of the eastern world and still linger in a few places. Their actions tend to be mundane and innocuous, but some of them engage in bizarre or dangerous behavior. Some say they are a part of their souls given up by draconic Kralori.

*Legendary Abilities:* Hide in Forest, Observant, Stalk Prey, Withering Touch

**Hair** – These weak but unpleasant spirits frequent stoves and fires used for cooking. Folk scholars claim they are the ghosts of those unsatisfied by their own or others' cooking or who died while cooking, often from a fire.

*Significant Abilities:* Spoil Taste of Food, Stink of Burnt Hair

**Hanged** – Hanged ghosts are the spirits of executed criminals and dangle from trees with bent, stretched necks and long, red tongues. They grab travelers with their claws and strangle them to death, absorbing the life energy and growing stronger. This often creates another, weaker hanged ghost.

*Exceptional Abilities:* Grab with Clawed Toenails, Strangle with Feet

**Headless** – Such entities are usually the ghosts of the beheaded. Some seek their own heads, and others will eagerly replace their head with that of another.

*Significant Abilities:* Seek Head

*Exceptional Abilities:* Frightening, Sever Mortal Head

**Hopping** – These ghosts are non-corporeal versions of the hopping corpse, and many specialists think that they are the product the same processes, some resulting in the physical form of the actual corpse, others the spirit. They feed on the life force of mortal victims.

*Significant Abilities:* Hop in Pursuit, Smell Living Breath

*Exceptional Abilities:* Drain Energy

**Host** – These rare ghosts manifest at night and create the illusion of a fine house and host or hostess. After a night of hospitality, delights,

and even physical pleasure, the victim wakes beside or in a grave. Locals usually know the story of the ghost's origin and avoid its deserted habitation, but travelers can stumble into its magic, and they often leave the experience suffering from madness or other personality quirks.

*Exceptional Abilities:* Heighten Emotion, Hospitable, Illusory Home, Seduce

**Hungry** – Ancestors without descendents, criminals, foreigners, and others can all become hungry ghosts. They seek nourishment of any kind. Some are scoundrels and a nuisance, while others are malevolent and dangerous. Some can breathe fire or have other strange, unique abilities.

*Significant Abilities:* Breathe Fire, Curse, Devour, Hungry

**Husband** – If a betrothed man dies before marriage, the families will often seek to finalize the marriage. The woman is now married to a ghost until her own death. Most of them find this situation quite undesirable, but the marriage is legally recognized and any attempts to circumvent it will arouse the anger of the ghost husband, society, and the government.

*Significant Abilities:* Haunt Bedchamber

**Inanimate Objects** – Ghosts of all eras have chosen to haunt or become trapped in mundane objects. In folk tales, these range from simple tools to swords, machinery, and buildings. They bear some similarity to the poltergeists of the west. Some are quite powerful.

*Significant Abilities:* Make Appropriate Sounds, Move



**Leering Faces** – These ghosts occur individually or in groups. They typically haunt desolate places, seeking no more than to terrify passers-by.

*Significant Abilities:* Leer Terribly

**Long Hair** – These are the ghosts of those that died in a room with a broom. They are a particular nuisance.

*Significant Abilities:* Moan & Whine, Tangle Hair

**Loyal Wife** – Loyalty is a prized trait in Kralori society, no more so than for wives. Some of these women, however, are so devoted that they return as ghosts after their deaths to tend to their families. Even if the husband, children, and other relatives might be initially delighted to see their loved one, it is unnatural and dangerous for the long-term health of all those around her. She may eventually fade away on her own, or she may have to be exorcised. Even as she goes about her duties, she will be gradually pulling her closest kin into Hell.

*Exceptional Abilities:* Dutiful, Kill Slowly, Loving, More Beautiful Than Ever

**Lust** – Rapists, sexual deviants, and the lascivious in general can become lust ghosts. They lurk in dark corners and drive mortals to commit the same crimes. Even after they are driven away, they can leave their victims permanently affected.

*Significant Abilities:* Heighten Lust, Inspire Sexual Deviance

**Mountain** – These curious entities are found only in the central and southern provinces. They are black and hairy and look like monkeys or



small, ugly men. They often have but one leg, and they eat crabs and live in trees. If they find out a person's name, they can cause that person harm, but they are otherwise harmless. Nicknames and the like are not effective.

*Significant Abilities:* Possess a Single Trait, Severe Itching

**Old Amahs** – The souls of loyal servants sometimes return to the mortal world to continue their work. They do not necessarily dwell in their former homes. They appear and do

housework, tend children, and perform other basic tasks. Households often appreciate their efforts, but they almost always wish for their departure.

*Significant Abilities:* Clean Home, Comfort Child, Ghostly, Tend Infant

**One-Eye** – Kralori necromancers classify these ancient, evil spirits as ghosts, but they bear more resemblance to demons of some kind. Sometimes they appear as no more than a baleful eye in brown mist, but they can take the more material form of a cyclopean giant.

*Legendary Abilities:* Choking Fog, Crush Underfoot, Death Gaze, Fade Away, Horrifying Presence

**Pacing** – These strange beings wander indecisively in meadows and fields in central and northern Kralorela. If bothered, a pacing ghost takes the form of a colorful snake with two heads and attacks. It is poisonous, but if it has been unable to bite its targets after three tries, it bites itself to its own destruction.

*Exceptional Abilities:* Poisonous Bite





**Paper** – The Kralori create these spirits when they make paper sacrifices for their love ones. Some such creatures, unable to find their target in the Underworld, try to serve other ghosts or wander about unhappily in the mundane realm.

*Significant Abilities:* Flutter in a Breeze, Carry Ghost Message, Whine Piteously

**Pregnant, Benign** – A woman that dies during pregnancy can become this kind of ghost. She comes by day to buy food for and feed babies using what turn out to be Hell Notes. If mortals can find her grave, they can uncover a living, perfectly normal child within; the child she never bore.

*Significant Abilities:* Love Babies, Wealthy

**Pregnant, Malign** – On the other hand, a woman that dies in childbirth sometimes returns as an evil ghost. She seeks pregnant women and babies, often in their homes, to suck their blood until they die.

*Exceptional Abilities:* Smell Infant, Smell Pregnancy, Stalk, Suck Away Life Blood

**Premature Burial** – Those interred before their time lurk below the surface of graveyards and attempt to pull mortals down below. They usually strike at night, and little more than their hands and arms is ever seen.

*Exceptional Abilities:* Pull Down

**Red Face** – These alluring, crimson spirits, known as Yow Jing, lure men into frequent sex and exhaust them until dead. These sirens originate in the overly lusty behavior of mortals.

*Significant Abilities:* Ravish, Seductive, Strong

**Shoe** – These nuisance ghosts lurk at thresholds and are thought to be the spirits of lazy or wronged servants.

*Significant Abilities:* Soil Feet, Steal Shoes

**Sickness** – There are many, many kinds of disease in Kralorela. Each has its own legion of spirits, some weak, a few terribly powerful. All serve Jeng Ho Moo, a Sekeveran demon lord.

**Snow** – These are the ghosts of those that have frozen to death. They are most common in Shiyang Province and Chern Durel.

*Exceptional Abilities:* Bitter Cold, Freezing Snow, Obscure Pathway

**Still-born Child** – The ghosts of babies seek out their own and new mothers and then drain their lives away, leaving little more than a husk.

*Exceptional Abilities:* Smell Infant, Weaken Baby, Weaken

New Mother

**Suffering** – These souls dwell in the hills, moaning and sniveling. They may be a form of Hungry Ghost, but they are more innocuous.

*Significant Abilities:* Moan, Snivel

**Suffocation** – Ghost such as this appear as a white sheet or blanket and always seek to choke the life form their victims. They may result from mortals dying from asphyxiation, or they may just be residual energy from such events.

*Significant Abilities:* Gasp Malevolently, Suffocating Embrace



**Suicides** – Self-destruction creates a particularly unpleasant, potent ghost. They vary widely based on their abilities in life and the form of their deaths. A few examples are given below:

***Drowned in a Well***

*Exceptional Abilities:* Drown, Induce Despair, Hate Men, Moan Hauntingly

***Jumped from a Height***

*Significant Abilities:* Crumble Edge of Precipice, Push Mortal

***Poisoned***

*Exceptional Abilities:* Poison Food, Poison Water, Spoil Food

**Tall** – These tree high ghostly entities originate in children who spoke ill of parents. They have tiny mouths and spit their teeth at those mortals they encounter.

*Significant Abilities:* Hard Skin, Kick with Clawed Feet, Spit Sharp Teeth

**Tea** – Such ghosts sell poisonous tea to force mortals to join them.

*Significant Abilities:* Hard Bargainer, Poisonous Tea

**Thunder** – These noisy, filthy ghosts live in trash outside house walls. They come from the dead souls of people of the same nature.

*Significant Abilities:* Noisy, Smelly

**Tongue** – Its long tongue hanging to the ground, this ghost seeks the flavors of the mundane world. The area around a tongue ghost is usually quite barren. When such a ghost encounters a new taste, it will lick it relentlessly and may lap a thing completely away. These ghosts

occur in all parts of the empire except the north.

*Significant Abilities:* Lick, Taste

**Tree** – Kralori lore says these are the ghosts of dead prostitute, but they are actually a form of dryad driven mad by their isolation from the great forests of the east eons ago. They linger in small groves, especially at night.

*Exceptional Abilities:* Crush & Strangle, Murderous, Seductive

**Unmarried Daughter** – A young woman that dies before her engagement will continue to seek a husband under some circumstances. Her family can have her marry a man from another family, suddenly a widow, and then have him marry another daughter of the family. This usually placates the spirit of the dead woman.

*Significant Abilities:* Anger Household Animals, Extinguish Cook Fires, Increase Family Rancor, Spoil Stored Food, Wail Through the Night

**Wanderer** – These ghosts frequent marshes and offer help to the lost, usually taking them into the wilderness to die, draining them slowly of their lives as they do so.

*Exceptional Abilities:* Appear Helpful, Call Mist, Drink Soul, Hide Way

**Vengeful Woman in White Dress** – These powerful spirits of death appear as white-faced women with fabulously long, bone-white hair in pale, trailing robes. They suck the life from men and are extremely rare.

*Exceptional Abilities:* Devour Life



**White-Hair** – This wrathful man demon hides its evil nature at first by appearing and behaving as a classical scholar. When he then attacks his victim, his long, ropy hair springs forth from beneath his cap, claws emerge from his fingertips, and his writing brush becomes a sword.

*Exceptional Abilities:* Strangle with Hair, Surprise Attack, Sword Fighting

**Wronged** – Some souls must seek redress before they can pass onto the Underworld, and they take the form of these ghosts. Only a fragment of the person remains in the mortal world, however, and this often limits the ability of the ghost to interact with mortals, much less take action. Many can only appear as hazy figures, perhaps performing or miming some significant action, in the hope that someone will address their need. They figure often in popular magistrate stories.

*Significant Abilities:* Give Clue, Manifest in Mortal World



# THE SORD SAGE

**Stew Stansfield**



This gentledrake is a Sord Sage of Lhankor Mhy. No, not a *Sword* Sage: a *Sord* Sage. Duh! Like all worshipers of the Grey One, he wears a beard. Ducks tend to have problems growing real beards, so his is false. The drake also wears a fine set of spectacles, with crystal lenses and a truestone frame. These allow the Sord Sage to focus on Truth; not just in books, but in various objects and in the behaviour of others, too.

The observant will note that the drake's right hand is making the sign of the Truth rune (Y). This is a common greeting among Lhankor Mhy worshipers. It's the Gloranthan equivalent of 'Scout's honour', or placing one's hand on, say, the bible in a court of law. Ducks are actually much more adept at the Illegal Exchange rune-sign (Y), mind you. And not just because they have four-fingered hands.

The Y sign is often used when people attempt to tell some mistruth, so that the magic of the sign might help them – rather like we cross our fingers behind our back, or under the table, when telling a fib. Gloranthans try to hide this sign too, of course! A common trick of wer-educks is to make the Y sign, but then flick the middle finger up when nobody's looking. This drake is very pious, however, and wouldn't do that. Honest.

Durulz religion is mystery to most people. Ducks tend to sacrifice to the same gods as the Storm-worshipping Sartarites—such as Orlanth, Humakt and Heler—but in their own peculiar fashion. Accordingly, this drake has the Air rune (G) tattooed across his beak. His main deity, of course, is Lhankor Mhy. Orlanth's lorekeeper is known for dabbling in the spellbooks of ancient Western sorcerers, and his Grey Sages across the lozenge are no exception. This drake is *obviously* a wizard, as he's wearing a hat with stars on it.

One final thing. Across this duck's back is sheathed Shrumgiglorbb, a magical sword retrieved from a sacred mushroom grotto (a black elf temple). Unlike most swords, this one is made of rotten wood, with a mushroom pommel. It doesn't tend to keep an edge that well, but has its own disruptive magics. The sword allows the bearer to communicate with the voralan group-mind, which can be an unsettling experience! It's also home to worms and beetles – which is great when you're feeling peckish.